1:Heckewelder M-5 (ca. 1800)1819
NM7 Delaware NM7



bushy tail, moving as he walked, as though it were on springs; but for these accompaniments, the man, walking on all fours, might have been taken for a bear of an extraordinary size. Underneath, where his hands were, holes had been cut, though not visible to the eye, being covered with the long hair, through which he held and managed his implements, and he saw through two holes set with glass. The whole was a great curiosity, but not to be looked at by every body.

There are jugglers of another kind, in general old men and women, who although not classed among doctors or physicians, yet get their living by pretending to supernatural knowledge. Some pretend that they can bring down rain in dry weather when wanted, others prepare ingredients, which they sell to bad hunters, that they may have good luck, and others make philters or love potions for such married persons as either do not, or think they cannot love each other.

When one of these jugglers is applied to to bring down rain in a dry season, he must in the first instance receive a fee. This fee is made up by the women, who, as cultivators of the land are supposed to be most interested, but the men will slily slip something into their hands in aid of their collection, which consists of wampum beads, tobacco, silver broaches, and a dressed deer skin to make shoes of. If the juggler does not succeed in his experiment, he never is in want of an excuse; either the winds are in opposition to one another, the dry wind or air is too powerful for the moist or south wind, or he has not been made *strong enough*, (that is sufficiently paid) to compel the north to give way to the south from whence the rain is to come, or lastly, he wants time to invoke the great Spirit to aid him on the important occasion.

In the summer of the year 1799, a most uncommon drouth happened in the Muskingum country, so that every thing growing, even the grass and the leaves of the trees, appeared perishing; an old man named *Chenos*, who

2:Newcomb E-4, 5 (1951-1952) 1956
NM7 Delaware NM7



groups. The Mask Being was "feasted" annually (J.T.). Speck described a number of other feasts and dances including "The Mask Dance Ceremony," an "Opossum Dance Ceremony," the "Buffalo Dance Ceremony" (apparently a recent diffusion to the Delawares), a "Corn Harvest Ceremony," and "The Spring Prayer and Football Ceremony to Advance Vegetation."[72]

### Shamans

There were two kinds of shamans, one devoted to curing and the other to divination.[73] Heckewelder distinguished the Medeu, or the individual associated with curing, from the Powwow or Juggler, who was higher in rank and was skilled in divination and magic.[74] The members of the latter group, according to Harrington, were organized into societies, but Trowbridge denied this, and there is no other confirmation to be found for the existence of societies. They probably represent a diffusion from the Iroquois to the Canadian Delawares.[75] Shamans might be of either sex and were generally old. Among their activities were weather forecasting, rain making, the preparation of "medicine" for hunters who were down on their luck, and curing. They also make "philters or love potions for such married persons as either do not, or think they cannot, love each other."[76] Before they performed their services, shamans had to be paid in wampum, tobacco, dressed deerskins, or the like. They wore costumes when treating the sick, and a tortoise shell rattle, dancing, singing, and "mumbling" were always a part of their performance.[77]

Lindestrom in the seventeenth century said that the "curing" shaman "runs back and forth, cries so that he is heard a long way off, rolls himself naked into the burning fire, takes fire brands with which he builds a wall all around the sick one, the sick one enduring such with patience."[78] Denton said of shamans:

> When any person is sick, after the means used by his friend, every one pretending skill in Physick, that proving ineffectual they send for a Pawaw or Priest, who sitting down by the sick person without the least enquiring after the distemper, waits for a gift which he proportions his work accordingly to: that being received, he first begins with a low voice to call upon his God, calling sometimes upon one sometimes on another, raising his voice higher & higher, beating of his naked breasts & sides, till the sweat runneth down, & his breath is almost gone, then that little which is remaining, he evaporates upon the face of the sick person three or four times together & so takes his leave."[79]

[72] Speck, 1937, pp. 49-87.

[73] Brainerd, 1884, p. 131; Heckewelder, 1881, p. 236; Brinton, 1885, pp. 70-71.

[74] Heckewelder, 1881, pp. 228 ff.

[75] Harrington, 1913, p. 217; Trowbridge MS.

[76] Harrington, 1913, p. 232; N.D.

[77] Harrington, 1913, pp. 232-34; M.D.

[78] Lindestrom, 1925, p. 240.

[79] Denton, 1845, pp. 8-9; Heckewelder, 1881, pp. 232-33, described the performance in similar terms.

3:Zeisberger M-5 (1767-1780)1910
NM7 Delaware NM7



years of age and women fourteen or fifteen. There is in general no very strong tie between married people, not even between the older. A mere trifle furnishes ground for separation. Not every Indian, however, is indifferent to the light behavior of his wife. Many a one takes her unfaithfulness so to heart that in the height of his despair he swallows a poisonous root, which generally causes death in two hours, unless an antidote be administered in good time; this is often done, the Indians knowing that the properties of certain herbs counteract each other and being able to judge from the effects, what poison has been taken. Women, also, have been known to destroy themselves on account of a husband's unfaithfulness. To prevent such a calamity, they make use of a Beson, a love-charm, prepared by the old people and sold at a good price. This is constantly carried about by one or the other of the parties and is believed to keep man or woman faithful. Such a charm is even declared to have had the effect of making a woman run always and everywhere after her husband, until weary of life she has destroyed herself, or of similarly affecting a man. For this Beson, also, the Indians have their antidote. All this converted Indians have related to me.

Older men and women, particularly, have another Beson, supposed to have the magic power of bringing many presents to them. This charm they guard jealously among their most precious belongings, and is said to have the effect of bringing them food, clothing and whatever else they may need. It is prepared of roots pounded very fine, incantations being murmured meanwhile. A little of this preparation, about the size of a pea, is sold with a white and black wampum shell for a considerable price, often for a belt of wampum with several pounds in money. The love charm and others are similarly prepared. Usually, this is done by old women, who thus support themselves and promote superstition among the young.

The men have a Beson for the chase. This beson is a preparation made by old men, who are no more able to hunt, consisting of roots and herbs or made of the seeds of a certain plant. This is sold by them at a high price. They may earn much in this way, for every huntsman carries such a charm about in his

759 but occasionally a man is blessed with a vision[8] in which the Creator bestows upon him this great gift, and like Wi·tapanóxwe, he becomes an herbalist. In addition to the knowledge of healing acquired through his guardian Spirit,[9] the informant has also followed carefully the teachings of his mother who was recognized by Delaware of the older generation as one adept in the art of compounding and administering herbal remedies.

[791] The second class is composed of individuals whose supernatural power enables them to perform acts such as reuniting an estranged couple or dispelling a supposedly evil charm. Certain rare plants are employed by them in practices resorted to only in emergencies.

It must be emphasized here that, according to Delaware belief, the practitioners are the medium through whom the Creator sends his healing power to alleviate distress caused by the physical and mental ills which attack the frail bodies of mankind.

Absolute faith in the unfailing power and benevolence of the Creator is the force which inspires the Delaware who has been blessed with a medicine vision and he is ever appealing in prayer to that higher Spiritual Force for aid in his professional undertakings.

[824 825] Believing that plants and animals in general are closely related to mankind[10] and that the Creator has endowed them individually with spiritual natures equally as sensitive as our own, the Delaware herbalist is always careful to perform the formal propitiatory rites before gathering a plant or removing part of an animal for use in making medicine.

759 824 782 278 If a practitioner is called upon to treat a person during the growing season in spring or summer, his first move, after the formal acceptance of the case and receipt of a gift of tobacco, is to go out and seek a plant of the desired species to be used in making medicine for the treatment of the particular ailment. After coming upon the first plant

[8] Zeisberger *(op. cit.* p. 25) "Fancied skill and imagined ability to heal the sick are traced to dreams which these individuals may have had in their youth. To the dreams they appeal, for in them they have much faith." See also Speck, 1931, p. 51; Harrington, 1921, p. 61; and Benedict, 1923.

[9] Harrington (1921, p. 80) quoting from the notes of R. C. Adams, "It is believed by the Delaware that every one has a guardian spirit which comes in the form of some bird, animal, or other thing, at times in dreams and tells them what to do and what will happen. The guardian spirit is sent from the Great spirit."

[10] Speck (1931, pp. 28, 29) discusses the principle of consanguinity as applied to deities and nature-forces.

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will visit several doctors in succession before finding one who has knowledge of preparing a remedy for his particular illness.[15]

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The person, either male or female, known by the term meaning "one who uses medicine for magic purposes," apparently had a larger number of patients in early times than the type of practitioner previously described. Zeisberger *(op. cit.,* p. 25), and Heckewelder *(op. cit.,* p. 231), from whom this impression is obtained, give rather detailed accounts of their seemingly weird practices. Both writers attribute the popularity of this group of healers to their feigned ability of dispelling the charms of evil sorcerers whom the Indians constantly feared. Witapanóxwe clarifies the distorted impressions implicit in these accounts by his interpretation of the procedure employed in treatment. The herbalist was called upon to aid individuals who have experienced difficulty in their marital relations or who have tried unsuccessfully to win the favor of a lover. Others came to him to be freed from malevolent influences. His power was not, however, limited to the control of human beings but extended to animals as well. Such a person was truly a "powerful man." This great power was entrusted with the admonition that it must never be used for malevolent purposes. Like the group of practitioners previously mentioned, the code of such people was based upon profound faith in the Creator, strict observance of the laws of nature and a deep regard for the traditions of their tribe.

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The plants employed by such an herbalist were of the rarest and most powerful kind. Their habitat and medicinal properties were not known to ordinary individuals. Such plants were unable to withstand the progress of civilization because, as my informant put it, "they could not live in unclean surroundings." The preparation made from these rare flora was known to the Delaware as "medicine for magic use," or "love medicine" (Zeisberger, *op. cit.,* p. 83). It was regarded as a gift, not to be used upon ordinary occasions but only in cases of emergency.

[15] Zeisberger (*ibid.,* p. 55) states that "Concerning plants and roots of medicinal value, it would be possible, if one were to devote himself to inquiry, to secure a great deal of information from the Indians for what one does not know another does, each man and woman having some knowledge in this direction, some more, some less. Hence, the custom that a patient who has consulted an Indian and secures a medicine from him without, however, being benefited, will go immediately to another; if no relief is obtained through his advice, the patient goes to a third, a fourth, until he finds one whose medicine helps."

of this substance. His niece was preparing it for a small child who was dangerously ill. She dropped a small quantity in a cup of hot water and observing it settle to the bottom, knew that the small patient would not recover. The medicine was administered as a tea, but the child died in a short time.[23]

In the making of an emetic, the necessary water should be dipped from the stream *with* the current;[24] for a cathartic, *against* the current. A similar regulation applies to the gathering of bark; for use as an emetic, the bark is peeled upward; for a cathartic, downward.

Formerly there were among the Delaware, as among other tribes, certain men and women whose supernatural power enabled them to communicate with the dead, to locate lost persons and objects and to foretell coming events. This practice was known as "locating or foretelling," and one who possessed such power was known as a "man who tells of the future." The source of this extraordinary power was attributed to one's guardian spirit or in some instances to the spirits of the dead. Those who were able to communicate with the dead usually performed at night. Such a person was also thought able to cure paralysis.

Some individuals who possessed the power to stay under water for a period of several hours at one time, were frequently called upon to locate a drowned person or a submerged object. One man was known to have found the body of a drowned person after months of futile searching by others. Some years later, the son of this shaman, after becoming converted to Christianity and studying for the ministry, finally persuaded his father to abandon the native faith and join the Christian church. In doing so the old seer, forsaken by his supernatural guardian, forfeited his magical power. Later the old man returned to the Delaware religion, but the power which enabled him to be of service to his tribesmen, was gone forever.

Witapanóxwe's grandfather was one of the last of the Delaware to possess such extraordinary mental and physical powers. He was able to perform the submersion feat and several times located the bodies of persons who had drowned in the rivers of Kansas. On one occasion a

[23] In reference to remedies for fever, Zeisberger observes (*op. cit.*, p. 55) that "when a patient has been given a dose, they are generally able to tell by its workings whether he will recover or die. If he does not retain the medicine it is regarded as a sign that he will hardly recover."

[24] This practice was noted by Heckewelder, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

team of horses which had broken through the ice, were rescued through this same ability, to remain beneath the surface of the water for a considerable period. Power for this ability was given him by a teal duck which appeared to him in a dream. In the informant's words:

> When a boy, my grandfather always went swimming every morning before sun-up, even when there was a thin coating of ice on the river. One time he dreamed of going down to the ice-covered stream very early to bathe as usual. When he jumped into the water the echo could be heard down the river. Then suddenly he heard a voice saying to him, "I am going to make you a strong man. You will be able to go under the water as I do." He did not see anyone around but there close by was a teal. And he could go down under the water and get fish, too.

So close was the connection of divination with the spiritual realm that the Delaware noted carefully the last words of a person near to death. At such a time the dying one is believed to be in close communication with the souls of the departed, who may impart messages of great importance through this medium to the living. One aged woman while on her death-bed spoke as follows:

> My kindred, we have been wonderfully blessed. We have enjoyed the gifts which the Creator bestowed upon us. That is because we have kept our own religion and observed the teachings of our elders in all things. If you continue to do this in the future, you will not be subjected to the evils which increase as civilization increases. Do not give up your own religion.

Another old woman foretold the coming of the railroad twelve years prior to its appearance, while a third foresaw the granting of citizenship to the Indians twenty years before its occurrence.

### The Sweating Rite

The importance of the sweat lodge ritual, as carried out by the Delaware for the purpose of spiritual and physical purification, is attested both by early observers,[35] and by more recent students.[36] According to Zeisberger, in his discussion of Delaware customs, the practice was attended by rather elaborate rites and was evidently regarded as one of the major ceremonies. It was performed in honor of fire, being called *machtuzin*, a term meaning "to perspire," according to the same writer's translation. A similar rite is described by Harrington, whose informants named it *muxhat'olzing*. This is recorded as a variant of the Annual Ceremony.

[35] Zeisberger, *op. cit.*, p. 138; Heckewelder, *op. cit.*, p. 225; Loskiel, 1794, pt. 1, pp. 108-9.
[36] Harrington, 1921, 122-126; Speck, 1931, pp. 72-74.

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
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## IV. ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES

### Astronomy, Mathematics, etc.

*1.[1] Planetary system*

According to Captain Pipe, the stars were put in the sky for the guidance of the Indians—the whites had the compass. According to John Johnston, the Indians believed that there were four fixed stars in the North, East, South, and West, which were rivets holding up the sky. The seven stars were once seven boys who became such wizards that they could not dwell upon the earth.

*2. Origin myth*

Captian Pipe—They claim to be descendants of the Wyandots, and relate these circumstances connected with their birth. The Wyandots sprang from a hole in the earth, which is still to be seen on Lake Huron. Not long after their discovery of the world above, which they now inhabit, a virgin of that nation became pregnant from some unnatural cause and in due time was delivered of twins, a son and daughter, who spoke a language entirely different from their parent; to wit, that of the present Delawares. That it was customary at that time to marry very near relatives; that these twins were so united and from this incestuous intercourse sprang the Lenee Lenaupaa, who, by direction of their uncles, the Wyandots, went to the borders of the Ocean and there settled themselves.

They suppose that there was formerly a body like our sun, which they call a great cornstalk with wide spreading branches, planted by "the God" in another world far above us—there, they suppose, lived a tribe of Indians, with a chief at their head—one time, one of the women who had a child was taken sick, and being asked what would cure her, she said, "If this corn stalk was pulled up, and I was laid by the hole, from hence it was taken, I should get well." The chief gave orders, and the corn

[1] Numbers refer to the numbers given to the elements in the table, *ante*, pp. 22-37.

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
NM7 Delaware NM7



do so in pretty regular succession, the worship is annual, or perhaps more frequent. The time and place of meeting is designated by this family, the principal male of which sends a messenger to the chief or head man of each village, who in his turn disseminates the information through the families of those under him. At the time appointed the nation, as well males as females assemble at a large lodge prepared for the purpose, where the females are placed in rear of the men. Here with grave and downcast looks they sit and receive from one of the old men an address upon the importance of a due observance of the ceremonies of the worship, and of abstinence from all unlawful pleasures during the continuance of them, among which any connection with women is counted a polluting sin. After describing at length the customs of their ancestors, among which this worship is placed in the foreground, the principal man of those who prepared the place of worship, having in his hand a small turtle-shell containing a few gravel stones, gives it a sudden shake, and at the signal the worshipers all rise. He then commences a history of his early dream, repeating it in short sentences, in a natural tone of voice and being followed in the repetition of each sentence by all who are in the house. At length he commences to sing his dream, being followed by the company as before, and relieved between the sentences by a chorus of singers who are seated apart from the other worshipers, and have a kind of tambourin composed of a deer skin stretched across four sticks, upon which they beat the time. The music is said to be agreeable and very soft.

After this person has finished the tale of his dream, in which is described minutely every circumstance connected with the appearance of his tutelar deity, as well as those events of his life, which being foretold, have *of course* come to pass, each person in the lodge takes him by the hand in a mystical manner and they all seat themselves. The men then smoke for a short time, preserving the utmost silence and gravity of deportment, during which occupation the speaker takes occasion to push the shell under his legs in a secret manner, to the next on his right, who declares his intention to speak by giving it a slight shake, or pushes it in the same secret way to the next. When one has